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REALISM

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BERKELEY AND SPIRITUAL REALISM

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FOREWORD

Spinoza and Berkeley: a coincidence.—Among modern philosophers Spinoza and Berkeley rank together in the manner of their reception. For more than a century after they died both were misinterpreted or neglected. Within the last century each in his way has become an influential factor in the excitement and formation of philosophical thought.

Both tardily recognised.—Spinoza died in 1677, and for more than a hundred years after was vaguely regarded as an impious atheist, under the ban of civil and ecclesiastical authority. Berkeley died in 1753, and for a century was ridiculed as an eccentric visionary, who denied the reality of the earth on which he trod, and of the human beings by whom he was surrounded.

Each now an influential philosophical factor.—To-day the contemplative reverence of Spinoza's temper is freely acknowledged, and his works are accepted as classics in the philosophical litera-

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ture of Europe, the productions of one who devoted his short life to reasoned meditation about God, or the Universe which he identified with God. And the philosophy of Berkeley is now interpreted as a serious endeavour to vindicate the ultimate spirituality of the universe, and the moral or supernatural agency constantly at work in nature. Within the last forty years (in 1871 and 1901) two large editions of his Collected Works have issued from the Oxford Clarendon Press, besides about ten thousand copies of annotated 'Selections from Berkeley,' much used as a text-book in the colleges and universities of Britain and America. Within the same period, too, Berkeley has been the subject of numerous criticisms in the periodical literature of France, Italy, Germany, and America, as well as in this country.

Questions common to both, but differently answered by each.—Spinoza and Berkeley had this in common, that they found their supreme interest in the final problem of the universe into which we are all ushered as strangers at birth, and in which we now find ourselves transitory visitors, trying to forecast our final destiny. Is Matter or Mind, Body or Spirit, or Something that transcends both, at the root of all? Is the

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Reality with which we have constantly to do blind, uninterpretable, meaningless; or is it the revelation of perfect reason and goodness? Is the world, underneath its continuous transformations, a settled Cosmos, and thus trustworthy and interpretable; or is it ultimately a Chaos, which for a time takes the appearance of Cosmos, but which may become a chaotic enigma, unfit to yield science, or to enable us to regulate our actions for the benefit of life? Must I regard myself as a transitory bubble on the endless stream, or as destined for continuous personal or morally responsible life, after this embodied self loses its present embodiment in death? Is Pessimism or Optimism the final goal of the evolution in which I find my embodied self involved?

To which this Age is more alive than any preceding one.—These are questions to which this age has become more awake than any preceding one; which may account for its being attracted, at opposite poles, by the Pantheistic reasonings of Spinoza and the Spiritual Realism of Berkeley. Spinoza in his final Unity finds God in the evil as well as in the good, in the lives of Caligula and Borgia as much as in the lives of the wisest or holiest of mankind.

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Berkeley, on the other hand, less adventurous intellectually, accepts in faith the fact of man's independent power to make himself wicked, and thus refers to the man himself, apart from God, the evil acts of which man accordingly is the creator.

Can they be disposed of in science of nature alone?—Is a final settlement of these questions to be looked for in a scientific study of nature and so-called natural causes? Can they be disposed of (positively or negatively) by observation and physical induction? or is spiritual insight, under necessary presuppositions of reason, required? In short, is the true philosophy Materialism or Spiritual Realism?

Materialism and Spiritual Realism.—Berkeley's Realism belongs to one of the two forms, which philosophy has been apt to assume from the beginning;—the shallower, which stops short amidst the visible and tangible phenomena of the material world and their laws; and the deeper, which is dissatisfied till it reaches the spiritual world, on which physical phenomena depend, and from which they derive their scientific significance. He thus contrasts them:—
'There are two sorts of philosophers. The one placed Body first in the order of things, and

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made the faculty of thinking depend there-upon; supposing that the principles of all things are corporeal; that Body most really or principally exists, and all other things in a secondary sense and by virtue of that. Others, making all corporeal things to be dependent upon Soul or Mind, think this to exist in the first place and primary sense, and the being of bodies to be altogether derived from, and presuppose that of Spirit or Mind.’¹

The Sequel.—The ground in reason, and the moral implicates of the second of those philosophies are presented for critical consideration in the following chapters; but perhaps this was a presumptuous undertaking for one in his ninetyeth year.

¹ *Siris*, sec. 263.

October 1908.

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CHAPTER I

BERKELEY

Berkeley's Place in the Modern Philosophical Movement.—John Locke, George Berkeley, and David Hume were in their times the leading representatives of European philosophy. England was represented by the cautious and sagacious Locke, watchful of the limits of human knowledge; Ireland by Berkeley, the subtle spiritual realist, with his finally moral and religious conception of the universe; and Scotland by Hume, the agnostic critic of the supernatural. Locke's *Essay* or book of ideas belongs to the seventeenth century; the earlier part of the eighteenth was illuminated by Berkeley; and its later years were stimulated intellectually by Hume. Prior to this memorable trio, the philosophic centre had

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been in France, under Descartes and Malebranche, and with Spinoza in Holland; after Hume, but by reaction, the centre shifted from Britain to Germany under Kant and Hegel, and Lotze, the successors of Leibniz.

Berkeley's Personality.—In personal charm, spiritual fervour, benevolent activity, pleasing imagination, and graceful literary expression, all combined, Berkeley is a prince among philosophers and philanthropists. His subtle thought evoked the sceptical intelligence of Hume, and his ardent human interest made the social economy of Ireland, and the Christian civilisation of the world beyond the Atlantic inspiring ideals in his life.

Kilkenny and Trinity College, Dublin.—The record of his opening years is scanty. We know that he was born in the county of Kilkenny in 1685, and that he was trained in the local academy at Kilkenny. At the age of fifteen he entered Trinity College, Dublin, where he graduated in 1704, the year in which Locke died. Three years later he was admitted to a Fellowship with high distinction in Mathematics and Philosophy, and afterwards took orders in the Irish Church.

Inspired by a new Far-reaching Thought.—When hardly twenty, a new and far-reaching

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thought about the material world, and what its reality means, had somehow taken possession of him. His 'Commonplace Book,' first published in my *Life and Letters of Berkeley* in 1871, is a striking revelation of his singular state of mind, between the age of nineteen and twenty-four—fervid hostility to empty abstractions, about which philosophers were apt to busy themselves, and reaction in favour of concrete realities and living experience. Through its pages he is under the inspiration of this far-reaching thought, anon calling forth flashes of philosophical enthusiasm. It is constantly referred to by Berkeley as the way of escape from sceptical despair, and as what, notwithstanding the misunderstanding and opposition it was sure to encounter, he was resolved to press upon the world with all convenient speed.

This Thought pervades the 'Commonplace Book' of his Youth.—Here are a few sentences, like many others in the 'Commonplace Book': 'The reverse of the Principle I take to have been the chief source of all that scepticism and folly, all those contradictory and inexplicable puzzling absurdities that have in all ages been a reproach to human reason. I know there is a mighty sect of men who will oppose me. I am young, I

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am an upstart, I am vain. Very well, I will patiently bear up under the most lessening, vilifying appellations the pride and rage of man can devise. One thing I am not guilty of. I do not pin my faith on the sleeve of any great man. . . . 'Tis on the discovery of the nature and meaning of Existence that I chiefly insist. This puts the wide difference between the sceptics and me. This I think wholly new. I am sure it is new in me. . . . I take not away Substances. I only reject the philosophic sense, which is in effect nonsense, of the word Substance. Ask a man not tainted with philosophic jargon, what he means by *Corporeal Substance*. He shall answer, bulk, solidity, and such like sensible qualities. *These I retain*. The *philosophic* Substance, of which I have no idea, I discard; if a man may be said to discard that which never had any being, was never so much as imagined. . . . I know not what they mean by "things considered in themselves." This is nonsense, jargon. . . . *Thing* and *idea* are much words of the same extent and meaning. By *idea* I mean any sensible or imaginable thing. . . . Real existence is not conceivable without perception and volition. Existence is perceiving and willing, or being perceived and willed. . . . I am the farthest

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from scepticism of any man. I know with an intuitive knowledge the existence of other things as well as my own soul. The chief thing I pretend to do is only to remove the mist or veil of words.'¹ In short, if men would lay aside abstract words and betake themselves to real ideas, they could not err, unless by misinterpreting the real ideas actually present to their senses.

Presented to the World in 'Essay on Vision,' 'Principles,' and 'Dialogues' (1709-13).—Berkeley hastened to give the world the pregnant thought which thus early inspired him. He restrained himself, however, so far as to propose it at first only in one of its applications. The eye, the hand, and the organs of locomotion are our chief media of intercourse with the material world outside our own bodies. That we cannot see anything not in contact with the organ of seeing, and that all at any distance from the eye is not actually seen, but only signified by what is seen, is the governing thought of his *Essay towards a New Theory of Vision*, in which he made his first appearance as a philosopher in 1709. This explanation of seeing was followed in 1710 by the *Principles of*

¹ See *Life and Letters of Berkeley*, pp. 30-33.

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Human Knowledge, in which the chief causes of error and difficulty in the sciences and the grounds of scepticism are inquired into, not as in the eye alone, but in all the five senses. The whole material world is presented as a system of mind-dependent sensible signs, in a measure interpretable by man, and which men are more or less able to turn to their own uses. The Spiritual Realism, argued for in the *Principles*, was presented anew in 1713 in *Three Dialogues*, which revive Plato and Cicero in modern philosophy. They recommend the new conception of the reality of the material world to readers who might be repelled by its less lively presentation in the *Principles*. These three books are the unprecedented achievement of a youth between his twenty-fourth and his twenty-eighth year.

Leaves Trinity College to see the World.—The continuous philosophical strain at Trinity College made relaxation and change of scene needful. The retired thinker was now to mix with the world. Soon after the appearance of the *Dialogues*, a Queen's Letter to the Provost of Trinity tells how 'humble suit having been made on behalf of our trusty and well-beloved George Berkeley, one of the Junior Fellows of that our College, that we would give him leave

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to travel and remain abroad during the space of two years, for the recovery of his health and his improvement in learning, we have thought fit to dispense with the articles of residence on his behalf. The two years' leave of absence was in the end extended to seven, and for twenty years after the date of the Queen's Letter, Berkeley's visits to Ireland were infrequent. His middle life was devoted to philanthropic enterprise more than to philosophical ideas.

In London and Italy (1713-20).—Berkeley's first social experience away from Dublin was among the brilliant circles in London that made the reign of Anne illustrious in the history of English literature. Introduced by Swift to Addison and Steele and Pope, the youthful author of the *Dialogues* was a favourite in London coffee-houses and saloons in 1713. In the following year he found his way to Italy, where he lingered for some years, amidst scenes congenial to one attracted to art by the associations of history, and already enriched by ancient learning. A record of his movements during some of those years is contained in the 'Journal of a Tour in Italy,' first published in the *Life and Letters of Berkeley*.

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Publication of 'De Motu.—He returned to Ireland in 1721. During this prolonged absence the 'New Principle' was not forgotten. One of his resting-places on his way home was at Lyons. There he prepared a Latin Essay on Causation, entitled *De Motu*, which was published soon after he reached London. It insists that spiritual agency, human and divine, is the only efficient and final cause of motion in the material world. This is an application to the phenomena of motion of the thought that inspired Berkeley when he was hardly twenty.

A Philanthropic Project.—Soon after his return to Ireland we find him somehow possessed by the philanthropic inspiration which shaped his life during the next ten years. The philosopher became the philanthropic missionary of Christian civilisation in America, ready to sacrifice for this ideal the social attractions of the Old World in which he had grown into middle life. His official connection with Trinity College ended in 1724, when he was made Dean of Derry, one of the most valuable appointments in the Irish Church. But the American project carried him in the same year to London, ready to resign the Deanery in its behalf. It had been much in his mind for

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three years.¹ Dean Swift thus described the case in a letter to Lord Carteret, then the Irish Lord Lieutenant :—‘ There is a gentleman of this kingdom just gone for England. It is Dr. George Berkeley, Dean of Derry. He was a Fellow of the University here; and going to England very young, about thirteen years ago, he became the founder of a sect called the Immaterialists, by the force of a very curious book upon that subject. I am now to mention his errand. He is an absolute philosopher with regard to money, titles, and power; and for three years past has been struck with a notion of founding a university at Bermudas, by a charter from the Crown. He showed me a little tract which he designs to publish; and there your Excellency will see his whole scheme of a life academico-philosophical, of a College for Indian scholars and missionaries; where he most exorbitantly proposes a whole hundred pounds a year for himself. His heart will break if his Deanery be not taken from him. I discouraged him by the coldness of courts and ministers; but nothing will do. And therefore I humbly entreat your Excellency either to use such persuasions as will keep one of the first men in the kingdom for

¹ In 1724 he published a ‘ Proposal ’ to erect a College in the Isles of Bermuda, ‘ for converting the savage Americans to Christianity.’

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learning and virtue, quiet at home, or assist him by your credit to compass his romantic design; which, however, is very noble and generous.'¹

A College at Bermuda.—After years of anxious negotiation in London, where he experienced 'the coldness of courts and ministers,' of which Swift had warned him, Berkeley, with his newly-married wife, sailed on his way to Bermuda, in the faith of a supposed promise by Sir Robert Walpole of a charter, and financial help for the proposed college there, which was to be a fountain of Christian civilisation for the vast Indian population of North America.

Berkeley in Rhode Island.—He halted on his way for two years in Rhode Island, waiting there in vain for the charter and the grant; but he never saw Bermuda. (He had been deluded by the fair words of the minister.) Yet he was not idle in Rhode Island. He bought a little farm and built a house in a pleasant valley in the interior of the island, and there resumed the studies of his early years.

American Samuel Johnson.—Congenial society was not wanting. Soon after his arrival he was visited by the Reverend Samuel Johnson, distinguished along with Jonathan Edwards as one

¹ *Life and Letters of Berkeley*, pp. 102-3.

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of the two representatives of early American philosophy. Berkeley's letters to Johnson¹ are explanations of disputed points in his spiritual realism, to which Johnson was converted, and afterwards defended in his own works, in a manner that entitles him to an eminent place among American thinkers.

Fruits of Study in Rhode Island: 'Alciphron' and 'Theory of Visual Language' (1732-3).—Some fruits of Berkeley's studies in the secluded American valley were given to the world in 1732, immediately after his return to England. *Alciphron, or the Minute Philosopher*, made its appearance in March of that year. In the form of Dialogues he criticised the prevailing materialism, and presented his spiritual philosophy in aspects fitted to restore faith in the omnipresence of Omnipotent Spirit, in the moral order of the universe, and in the Christian revelation of God. Of the seven Dialogues, the fourth and the last are probably the most interesting. The former expands the visual symbolism of Berkeley's juvenile Essay on Seeing into a universal sense symbolism, which recognises in the ordered sequences of the material world the language of the Omnipotent Spirit in whom we live and

¹ *Life and Letters of Berkeley*, pp. 175-81.

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have our being. A hostile critic moved Berkeley to reply. *The Theory of Visual Language, showing the immediate Presence and Providence of a Deity, Vindicated and Explained*, appeared early in 1733, in answer to strictures on the Fourth Dialogue in *Aleiphron*.

Bishop of Cloyne.—Berkeley's wanderings in Europe and America during middle life were now ended. Two years after the return from a mission in which he had embarked with so much enthusiasm, he was made Bishop of Cloyne, through the influence, as it seems, of the philosophic Queen Caroline, and perhaps with some regard to what was due on account of the disillusion of the American vision. This remote diocese in the south of Ireland was his home for twenty years. His cherished hopes had faded. The ideal of America in the future, civilised and Christianised, was dissolved. In his remaining years signs of chastened enthusiasm and failing health abound. Still he resumed at Cloyne the work which cheered the recluse life at Rhode Island and inspired him in far-off years at Trinity College; now in a more meditative temper, less controversial, more disposed to lean for support upon illustrious philosophers of the ancient world,

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above all on Plato and Aristotle, Plotinus and Proclus.

'The Querist' and the Social State of Ireland (1735-37).—Berkeley's temper was too human and philanthropic for indulgence in merely contemplative thought. He was once more in his native country after a long absence. Ireland took the place of America. Industrious self-reliance was lacking among Irishmen, and his own favourite motto was '*non sibi sed toti.*' The crisis was the occasion of what some may consider the most useful of his books. It took the form of questions, five hundred and ninety-five in number. The first instalment of *The Querist* appeared in 1735, and the last in 1737. The sympathy of the Protestant bishop was not confined to the English colony of Protestants. It included all classes of his countrymen. He asked 'whether a scheme for the welfare of Ireland should not take in the whole inhabitants'; and 'whether it was not "a vain" attempt to project the flourishing of our Protestant gentry exclusive of the bulk of the natives.' He engaged the co-operation of the Roman communion by a letter to their clergy, asking for their help in trying to induce Irishmen to be industrious.

'Siris' and the Medical Virtues of Tar-water.

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—Some of his early years at Cloyne were years of famine and disease. This reminded him of American experience of the virtues of tar-water. He became the ardent apostle of this medicine, and connected it by curious links with his spiritual idealism. Contemplating the beneficence of tar-water, he was led by subtle associations to the constitution of the whole material world of which tar was a part; and thence to the efficient and final cause of a universe in which everything is connected with everything else, through the Omnipotent Spirit in Whom the Whole has its being. Although such ‘phantoms’ as ‘corporeal forces’ pass in the natural sciences as true causes, and are supposed by some to explain everything, yet in truth they explain nothing, for all true explanation lies deeper. It is found in Spirit or Mind, not in impotent corporeal things; while all corporeal things depend on Spirit; this containing, connecting, enlivening the entire material frame, so that those things which before seemed to constitute the whole of existence, prove to be but fleeting phantoms. Such is the spirit of *Siris*, Berkeley’s last addition to the literature of philosophy, described as ‘a chain of philosophical reflections and inquiries concerning the virtues of tar-water, and divers other subjects

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connected together and arising out of one another.' It was his legacy to the world in 1744.

Old Age and Death in Oxford.—A period of declining health followed. 'I submit to years and infirmity,' he writes to Dean Gervais in 1752. 'My views in this world are mean and narrow; it is a thing in which I have small share, and which ought to give me small concern. The evening of life I choose to pass in a quiet retreat. Ambitious projects, intrigues and quarrels of statesmen, are things I have formerly been amused with, but now they seem to be a vain fugitive dream.' He had long been possessed by a romantic desire to end his days in Oxford. The time was now come. In the summer of 1752 he found his home in the historic city of colleges. He was not permitted to enjoy it long. On a Sunday in January 1753, surrounded by his family, he was suddenly overtaken by the mystery of death, and the material world, about which he had speculated so long, ceased to be his medium of intercourse with his fellow-men.

Berkeley's Modest Estimate of his own Philosophy.—In the seven philosophical tractates already mentioned—three issued in sanguine impetuous youth, three others in active middle

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life, and the last in contemplative old age — Berkeley has unfolded and applied the Spiritual Realism of which he is an illustrious modern representative. He recognised how apt his conception of the material world is to be misinterpreted, and he renounced all claim to a fully elaborated philosophy. ‘I do not indeed wonder,’ he tells his American friend Johnson, ‘that on first reading what I have written, men are not thoroughly convinced. On the contrary, I should very much wonder if prejudices, which have been many years taking root, should be extirpated in a few hours’ reading. I had no intention to trouble the world with large volumes. What I have done was rather with a view of giving hints to thinking men, who had leisure and curiosity to go to the bottom of things, and pursue them in their own minds.’¹

¹ *Life and Letters of Berkeley*, p. 181. See also Berkeley’s correspondence with Sir John Percival, in Chapter v. of the *Berkeley*, in Blackwood’s Philosophical Classics.

CHAPTER II

THE MATERIAL WORLD AND ITS NATURAL ORDER

The Material World is Real in and through Percipient Mind. Its *esse* is *percipi*.—We put ourselves at Berkeley's point of view when we try in vain to conceive the material universe and its ambient space existing in all their present reality, yet unfelt, unperceived, unrealised in *any* intelligence, finite or divine, a dead universe, living mind in every form non-existent. Try to suppose this wholly abstracted material world as the sum total of reality. Is the conception possible? Is it not repugnant to reason? Must not a dead material universe, abstracted from all activities of living spirit, human or other, be wholly destitute of qualities? What can be meant by an unseen colour, or an unheard sound, or untouched, unresisted hardness? Is not human perception of *these* the deepest and truest conception we can form of what their existence or reality means? May we

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not even say that the material world exists only in order that it may be perceived, so that its changes may thus be signs to each of us of the reality of other bodies and spirits,—a world external to ourselves? When I try honestly to make this experiment of abstracting matter from all living spirit, I find, Berkeley would say, that the material world inevitably loses reality and becomes an unthinkable abstraction, which we may *call* 'matter' or 'corporeal substance,' using words, nevertheless, that have no meaning. Must not *percipi*, in short, be the *esse* of the things of sense?

That Perception is needed to make the Material World Real is Self-evident.—By Berkeley, in his youthful ardour, no proof or argument was required to sustain this proposition; to him the constant dependence of the material world upon the activities of living spirit seemed self-evident. It was but looking into one's own thoughts and trying whether one could conceive as possible, or in no way repugnant to reason, a figure or a motion, or a sound, or a colour, existing as an unperceived reality. If any one *could* do this, he was ready to abandon his favourite principle of the absolute dependence of the data of the senses for their reality upon living

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Mind or Spirit. It could not be. 'Some truths then are so near and obvious,' he exclaims, 'that a man need only open his eyes to see them. Such I take this important one to be, that all the choir of heaven and furniture of earth, in a word, all those bodies which compose the mighty frame of the world, have not any substance without a mind; that *their being* is to be perceived or known; and that so long as they are not perceived by me, or do not exist in my mind, or in that of any other created spirit, they must either have no existence at all, or else subsist in the mind of some Eternal Spirit; it being perfectly unintelligible, and involving all the absurdity of abstraction, to attribute to any single part of them an existence independent of Spirit. To be convinced of which one has only to try to separate the *being* of a sensible thing from its *being perceived*.'¹ In short, if there was no living spirit in existence to maintain the reality of the things of sense, the material world could have no reality. This alleged self-evident truth is above all what the student of Berkeley has to ponder and test, by prolonged and varied mental experiments of his own.

¹ *Principles of Human Knowledge*, sec. 6. See also the first of the *Three Dialogues*.

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An Objection answered.—It is not obvious at first, or indeed at last, to the unreflecting. They are ready to say that nothing is easier than to suppose books existing on a table, or trees existing in a park, or the stars existing in the ambient space, and no one all the time perceiving or thinking about them. Quite true, Berkeley would reply; but, in that case, the necessary conditions of the experiment have not been complied with. *The living mind of the objector himself* has not been withdrawn, and so the abstraction of spirit has not been complete. ‘What,’ he asks, ‘is all this, I beseech you, more than framing in your own mind ideas of books, trees, and stars, and at the same time omitting to frame the idea of any one that may perceive them?’ So that is nothing to the purpose. It only shows that the objector is able to perceive and imagine; not that things can have intelligible reality without a living perception of them. It shows that a man forgetting to take notice of *himself* has been in consequence deluded into supposing that he has found bodies existing wholly divorced from realising spirit; although all the while they were being realised in the objector’s own experience.

The Material World consists of Sense-pre-

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sented Appearances.—Accordingly the material world consists wholly of what we may call sense-presented phenomena or appearances, sensible qualities, *ideas* of sense as Berkeley calls them, on account of their dependence on being perceived. Colours are presented when we see, motions and resistances when we touch or move, and sounds in their varieties when we hear.

The Individual ‘Things’ of Sense are Bundles of Appearances.—The appearances presented to our senses do not come and go as isolated units. They appear blended together in separate bundles. Being found to cohere, the resembling bundles ‘come to be marked by one name, and to be reputed one thing.’ Thus a certain colour, taste, smell, figure, and consistence, having been observed to go together, are accounted one distinct thing, signified by the name *apple*. Other collections constitute a stone, a tree, a book, and the like sensible things; which, as they are pleasing or disagreeable, excite in us the passions of love, hatred, joy, grief, and so forth.

What Material ‘Substances’ and ‘Causes’ mean according to Spiritual Realism.—The different bundles of sensible qualities, or, as Berkeley calls them, ‘collections of the real ideas that are presented to the senses,’ are all

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that he meant by 'material substances.' A substance is nothing more than an isolated aggregate of qualities, somehow held together, and subject to continuous orderly changes of appearance. The united qualities undergo transformations in an order commonly called the order of nature. The steadiness of the order in which their transformations proceed enables us, after sufficient observation of their habits, to predict coming forms that they must assume, so that present phenomena become *signs* of absent phenomena with which they are connected under natural law; thus 'giving us a sort of foresight, which enables us to regulate our conduct in the material world for the benefit of life, and without which we should be eternally at a loss.'¹ And as 'substances,' in the material world, are only bundles of qualities, so 'causes,' in the material world, are only natural *signs* of coming changes. My habitual observation of apples enables me to foresee the taste of an apple before I eat it. Experience of the motions of heavenly bodies, those huge material substances, enables science to forecast the times of sunrise and sunset centuries in advance. But we know no more about material substance than that it is a bundle of sense-

¹ See *Principles*, sec. 31.

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presented qualities, and no more about their material causes than that the transformations in nature occur in a constant reliable order. What Power keeps the appearances united in bundles, or why the transformations which the bundles undergo are orderly and not chaotic, our senses do not tell us. 'That food nourishes, sleep refreshes, and fire warms us; that to sow in the seed-time is the way to reap in the harvest, and in general that to obtain such and such ends, such and such means are conducive—all this we know, not by discovering any necessary connection between our ideas and sense, but only by the observation of the settled laws of nature, without which we should be all in uncertainty and confusion, and a grown man no more know how to manage himself in the affairs of life than an infant just born.' ¹

Natural Co-existences and Natural Sequences.

—In short, we find that the phenomena of which the material world consists *coexist* in separate so-called 'substances,' and that they follow one another in a steady and therefore calculable *succession*, called 'causal' order. But all we are entitled to mean by material substance is this coexistence of qualities; and all we are entitled

¹ *Principles*, sec. 31.

to mean by material causation is this orderly, calculable succession of facts, which all depend for their reality on being perceived.

Percipient Spirits and Self-consciousness.—But this is not the whole or the chief part. Objects in the material world depend for their real existence on being perceived. Is there nothing to tell about the *percipients* as well as the perceived? The inconsiderate are apt to forget this question, because percipient spirits are not visible objects of sense, with which all are familiar; and yet percipient spirits are at the root of all things. So besides all that endless variety of ideas or objects of knowledge, aggregated in their (so-called) substances, and naturally ordered according to their (so-called) natural causes—besides these, Berkeley finds a '*something*' which knows or perceives them, and exercises divers operations, as willing, imagining, remembering, about them. 'This perceiving active being is what I call Mind, Spirit, Soul, or Myself. By which words I do not denote any one of my ideas, but a thing entirely distinct from them, wherein they exist; or, which is the same thing, whereby they are perceived.'¹ Thus the universe in which I am living con-

¹ *Principles*, sec. 2.

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sists of bundles of sensible appearances, constantly undergoing transformations, in an orderly calculable manner, all dependent on Spirit or Mind.

Signified by the Personal Pronouns. — But what of this ‘something,’ signified by the personal pronoun ‘I,’—not to speak of ‘you’ or ‘he’? ‘I’ is neither a quality nor a bundle of qualities, like the things of sense; nor can it be an empty abstraction, like the abstract material substance of some philosophers? For ‘I’ continues the same person; but the world of the senses, including my own body, is continually changing. In the whole world of sense-presented appearances, I find nothing corresponding to the ‘self’ that I am obliged to presuppose in all perceptions; and that is in a manner revealed when in memory I recall the past, and recognise that ‘I’ am a person who is still *the same person* as I was years before.

My personal Identity. — I find nothing in the world of the senses corresponding to this cord, as it were, of personal identity. I cannot remember the past without being sure that ‘I’ existed in that past. To suppose that my memory can go back to what happened before I existed would subvert the basis of knowledge. And my present feelings and thoughts are not thus

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identical with past ones. The pain or pleasure of to-day is not identical with the pain or pleasure I felt this day last year, however much it may resemble it. Without this personal identity 'I' could not be responsible for actions. Not so with the things of sense. When I call my body, or any other of the things of sense, 'the same' to-day as it was last year, this is only in a conventional meaning of the term 'same,' for they have undergone much change of their constituent phenomena in the interval; and the phenomena are the whole of them, nothing permanent underlying, as in the unique case of the identity of the 'I.' Moreover, things of sense are only signs of other things of sense, under laws over which the things themselves have no control. Intending personal volitions are absolutely self-caused; so that the self as their originating cause is alone responsible for them. On the other hand, the so-called natural 'causes' within the material world are only signs, connected with preceding signs, in what may be an unbeginning and endless procession. Morally responsible acts of will *must* originate in the persons who are responsible for them, if moral responsibility is real. It cannot be transferred to preceding (so-called) causes in an endless

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regress, as in the sense-symbolism of the natural world.

The only Real Agent in Existence is Spirit.—Spirit in fact is the one finally sustaining and finally active Reality in the universe, so far, at any rate, as the universe has any practical relation to me. The ‘substances’ and ‘causes’ in the material world are all subordinate to spirit. Matter consists of aggregates of appearances presented in the senses. The things of sense *per se* are wholly passive and impotent; persons are the only active originative powers.¹

Is an Impotent Material World therefore useless?—Does all this imply that the material world is a powerless illusion, and that only spiritual beings are real? Have the appearances of sense no office to discharge in the economy of human life and the universe? Far from it. According to Berkeley, they play indispensable parts in the world-drama. Look at some of these.

The Material World reveals to each Person that he is not the only Person in Existence.—1. In the first place, it is through the sense-presented signs commonly called ‘matter,’ that I find

¹ *Principles*, sec. 25, where the total impotence of matter is deduced from its dependence on being perceived; also *Siris*, secs. 154, 155, 252-258, etc.

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that I am not alone in the universe, a solitary percipient and voluntary agent. I find *some* presented appearances dependent on my perceptions and obedient to my will; but over the great majority I find that I have no control. Most of them come and go whether I will or not. In particular I perceive motions and other sensible changes which signify to me that spiritual agents, not myself, co-operate in their production. I recognise these appearances as the actions of embodied human spirits, in whose company I thus find myself, by means of this natural language of the senses, supplemented as it is by the various artificial languages of mankind, spoken and written, all due to our senses.

‘My body’ and its Office as a Medium.—In particular I find that *my* power over the different bundles of passive phenomena which form the things of sense is immediately confined to the small mass of matter in which I find myself embodied, and which I call *my body*, it being my special portion of the material world. It is by movements of my body or some of its organs that I signify *my* spiritual existence to other persons, and it is through like means that they signify *their* existence to me. None of my senses gives me an immediate perception of things that

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are not in actual contact with my body. We are apt to suppose that we see and hear things and persons that are at a distance from our bodies. It was by disproof of this, in his *New Theory of Vision*, that Berkeley, in 1709, opened the way to a full disclosure of his spiritual realism in the years following. Instead of seeing distant things or distant persons, we can see only *visual signs* of their presence, and of their distance from our bodies, the distance being signified by the amount of locomotive experience we should have to pass through to be in contact with their bodies. For the appearances we see vary in distinctness and otherwise, in proportion as the distant objects are near or far off. Visual and audible signs, especially their own bodily motions, in like manner introduce me to other spirits—other human beings—embodied like myself, and also to the whole world outside my own body. Our opportunities are multiplied indefinitely by the mechanical devices which things of sense supply for increasing this knowledge. Telescopes and microscopes are familiar examples.

The World of Sensible Signs shows above all the **Constant Activity of pervading Omnipotent Spirit**.—But the sensible signs which show the existence and activity of other human spirits

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like myself are few and far between, among the innumerable changes in the world opened to us through our senses. Though there are some changes in the things of sense, 'which convince us that *human* agents are concerned in producing them, it is nevertheless evident to every one that those things which are called the works of Nature, that is by far the greater part of the changes presented to our senses, are *not* produced by, or dependent on, the wills of men.' 'There is, therefore, some other Spirit that causes them; since it is repugnant to reason that they should subsist by themselves or uncaused. But if we attentively consider the constant regularity, order, and concatenation of all sensible things, we shall clearly perceive that they belong to the aforesaid Spirit Who works all in all, and by Whom all things consist.'¹ Thus the universe of sense-signs constantly signifies Omniscient and Omnipotent Spirit, even as their bodily signs reveal to me the thoughts and feelings and intending volitions of my fellow-men.

God speaks to all Men through the Data of their Senses as one Man to another through Spoken Words.—That all sensible signs signify the presence and agency of Omnipotent Spirit, in like

¹ *Principles*, sec. 148.

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manner as some sense-signs signify the presence and agency of a fellow human spirit, does not satisfy the sceptic. Alciphron, in the Fourth Dialogue, asks: 'Do you pretend that you can have the same assurance of the being of God that you can have of mine, whom you actually see stand before you and talk to you?' 'The very same, if not greater,' Euphranor replies. 'For by the person Alciphron is meant an individual thinking thing or spirit, and not the hair, skin, and visible surface, or any part of the outward shape, form, and colour of Alciphron. And in granting this (as you have done), you grant that, in strict sense, I do not see Alciphron, that is, that individual thing or Spirit, but only such visible signs as infer the being of that invisible thinking Soul. Even so it seems to me that though I cannot with eyes of flesh behold the invisible God, yet I do in the strictest sense perceive, by all my senses, such signs, such effects, as demonstrate the invisible God, with the same evidence at least as other signs perceived by sense suggest the existence of *your* Soul or Spirit, of which I am convinced by only a few sensible signs; whereas I do at all times and in all places perceive sensible signs of the being of God.' 'But it is my hearing you talk,' Alciphron rejoins, 'that is in strict philosophical truth the best

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argument for *your* being. And this is inapplicable to your purpose; for you will not, I suppose, pretend that God speaks to men through their senses as one man doth to another?' 'But what if it shall appear,' replies Euphranor, 'that God speaks to men by the intervention of arbitrary, outward, sensible signs, having no resemblance or necessary connection with the things they stand for; if it shall appear that by innumerable combinations of these signs in nature an endless variety of things is discovered to us, and that we are thereby taught and admonished what to shun and what to pursue, and are directed how to regulate our motions, and how to act with regard to things distant from us, will this content you?' Being assured that it would, Euphranor proceeds to fortify his position by illustrations of the sense-symbolism which makes the material world to us as really a language of God as spoken or written words constitute the language of men.

The Material World is charged with Pleasures and Pains, which by Interpretation of its Phenomena we can secure or avoid.—2. Through my senses I not only find that I am not solitary in the universe, but through my embodiments participate in innumerable pains and pleasures. The

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world of the senses is charged with *signs* of possible bodily pains and bodily pleasures; and it is by interpreting the phenomena presented to our senses that we distinguish health-giving signs from those which forecast bodily injury, so that we are able to avail ourselves of the one sort and to avoid the other. We find that bread will nourish our bodies, and that arsenic will destroy them. My body is a part of the universal system of sensible signs, and it is also, in this life, virtually a part of myself. But neither my body nor any other portion of the material world is supposed by the spiritual realist to be so dependent on *human* spirits as to go in and out of existence as it is perceived or not perceived by them, having thus only an interrupted reality, perceived now by one person and again by another. The things of sense are, on the contrary, always kept in existence in and by the Universal World-Mind that sustains and gives reality to the whole material world. Thus there is an established harmony, which enables the embodied spirit to regulate his actions for the benefit of his life.

Beattie's Travesty of Spiritual Realism.— Yet it has been strangely supposed that this spiritual realism requires us to alter our conduct in the affairs of life, and to act as if we were in

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an uninterpretable chaos. Read, for example, what the poet Beattie says about Berkeley in his *Essay on Truth*:—‘If a man believe this strange doctrine of Berkeley as steadily and with as little distrust as I believe the contrary, he will, I am afraid, have but little reason to applaud himself on this new acquisition in science; he will soon find that it had been better for him to have reasoned and believed and acted like the rest of the world. If he fall down a precipice, or be trampled under foot by horses, it will avail him little that he once had the honour to be a disciple of Berkeley, and that those dangerous objects are nothing but *ideas* in the mind. And yet if such a man be seen to avoid a precipice, or to get out of the way of a coach and six horses at full speed, he acts as inconsistently with his belief as if he ran away from a *picture* of an angry man, even while he believed it to be only a picture . . . I will not say that this man runs a greater risk of universal scepticism than of universal credulity. Either the one, or the other, or both, must be his portion; and either the one or the other would be sufficient to embitter my whole life, and to disqualify me for every duty of a rational creature. . . . But that I may no longer suppose what I maintain to be impossible, *i.e.* that mankind in

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general, or even one rational being, could, by force of argument, be convinced that this absurd doctrine is true — what if *all* men were in one instant (miraculously) deprived of their understanding by almighty power, and made to believe that matter has no existence but as an idea in the mind, all other things remaining as they are. Doubtless this catastrophe would, according to our metaphysicians, throw a wonderful light upon all parts of knowledge. But of this I am certain, that in less than a month after, there could not, without another miracle, be one human creature alive on the face of the earth.'

Berkeley's use of the term 'Idea' apt to mislead.—For Beattie's travesty of Berkeley's conception of the material world Berkeley is himself responsible so far as, by his application of the term 'idea' to what is actually presented to our senses, he seems to say that the objects present in the senses are only unmeaning fancies, that actual sense is identical with imagined sense. Berkeley himself thus anticipates Beattie's intended *reductio ad absurdum*:—'It will be objected that by the foregoing principles, all that is real and substantial in nature is banished out of the world, and instead thereof a chimerical scheme of ideas takes its place. All things

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that exist, exist only in the mind. What therefore becomes of the sun, moon and stars? What must we think of houses, mountains, rivers, trees, stones, nay even of our own bodies? Are all these but so many chimeras and illusions of the fancy? To all which I answer, that by my principles we are not deprived of any one thing in nature. Whatever we see, feel, hear, or in any wise understand remains as secure as ever, and is as real as ever. There is still a *rerum natura*, and the distinction between realities and chimeras remains in full force. This is evident from what I have shown is meant by real things, in opposition to chimeras, or ideas of our own framing.¹ Yet experience has shown that this application of the word 'idea,' alike to realities and to chimeras, is apt to suggest that the so-called 'real' is only chimerical. A bundle of signs that is seen or touched ought not to be even verbally identified with an imagined bundle.

The Material Universe exercises the Scientific Understanding.—3. Another function which Berkeley's material world discharges is that it exercises the understanding in interpreting scientifically the phenomena of which it is composed. These phenomena are interpretable and

¹ *Principles*, sec. 34; also 29, 30, 33.

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calculable, because they are evolved in constant order; as we commonly say, they are under natural laws. Their interpretability is founded on the constancy of the order in which their changes proceed.

Why do we believe that the Universe is a Cosmos?—How do we know that there must be steady order pervading what on the surface often appears chaotic? Berkeley refers the universal belief in the uniformity of nature to observation. ‘Having *always observed* that our perception of a certain round, luminous figure which we call the sun is accompanied by a sensation called heat, we conclude that the sun and heat are constantly connected; so that the appearance of the one is a sign of the appearance of the other, and so the one is called the *cause* of the other.’ But our narrow observation is not enough to explain faith in constant order underlying all natural changes. For ‘observation’ is necessarily confined to the present and the past; I cannot observe the future: indeed I can only observe a small portion of the present and the past. Even if I had reasonable assurance that natural order had been universally maintained hitherto, what guarantee have I for its continuance? Do I know *a priori* enough of the universe in which I

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find myself, to be assured that it *is* a universe in which the *cosmos* of the past may not become *chaos* in the future? It is not enough to say that uniform order in the past has accustomed us to expect a like uniformity in future; that an irresistible habit of expectation is thus formed, and that we could not live if we were to resist this habit. That is true; but to convert the habit into *reasonable faith* we must *presuppose* that we are living in a reasonably conducted or trustworthy universe. We must receive the data of the senses in reasonable confidence, that the habits which they form are in harmony with actual Reason immanent in things,—that we are living in a natural cosmos, not in what may turn out in the end to be chaos. But more of this in the sequel.

The Material World is fitted to evoke Philosophic Thought.—4. The material world, under Berkeley's conception of it, is not only fit to exercise the scientific understanding, but the conception itself signally exercises philosophic reason and imagination, and sustains faith in the religious conception of the universe. Berkeley's immaterialism, as Sir James Mackintosh remarks, 'is chiefly valuable as a touchstone of metaphysical sagacity, showing those to be altogether

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without it, who, like Johnson and Beattie, believed that his speculations were sceptical, that they implied any distrust of the senses, or that they had the smallest tendency to disturb reason or to alter conduct.' And to think of the material world as itself impotent, and necessarily dependent for its real existence and its natural order upon omniscient and omnipotent World-Mind, is at least a step to a more definite religious conception of the spirituality, intelligibility, and morality that underlies the universe. Virgil and Wordsworth are among many examples of how visible nature touches the imagination of the poet.

Does Berkeley's Conception of the Material World satisfy the Human Mind?—But after all one may ask whether this way of thinking about the ordered world presented to our senses fully satisfies the human mind, as a sufficient expression of our relations to matter and its changes.

'Sameness' versus 'Similarity' in things.—Does the continued existence of things visible and tangible, and their orderly changes, through their dependence on the omnipotence of the Universal World-Mind, adequately express the

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sameness, for example, of this book on my table, as seen and handled by two different persons; or of the table itself on which the book was resting? When a hundred persons are perceiving a tree simultaneously, are there really a hundred trees, all *similar* but not the *same*? Can two persons ever be properly said to perceive the *same* thing, if the appearances presented to each of them are not numerically the same, but only similar? Can what is within my mind be identically, at the same time, within the mind of another? Is the material 'substance,' against which Philonous argues so strenuously in the *Dialogues*, only an empty abstraction? Does the bundle of impotent sense-appearances which, according to Berkeley, alone makes individual material substances,—does *this* exist, when they are unperceived, thus preserving its objective identity when presented to innumerable percipients?

Berkeley's Answer.—Philonous, who personates Berkeley in the *Dialogues*, seems more embarrassed by this difficulty than by any other, when he tries to vindicate *perceived similarity*, as practically *objective sameness*, in the case of a thing present to the senses of different percipients. Hylas objects that the same *idea* which one man has 'in his mind' cannot be in the mind of another

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man, any more than his consciousness can be the consciousness of another. 'Doth it not therefore follow,' he asks, 'that no two persons can perceive the same thing? and is not this highly absurd?' 'If the term *same* be taken in the vulgar acceptation,' Philonous replies, 'it is certain (and not at all repugnant to the principles I maintain) that different persons may perceive the same thing, or the same thing exist in different minds. Words are of arbitrary imposition, and since we are used to apply the word *same* when no distinction or variety is perceived, and I do not pretend to alter their perceptions, it follows that as men have said before, 'several saw the same thing,' so they may upon the like occasion still continue to use the same phrase, without any deviation either from propriety of language or from the truth of things. But if the term *same* be used in the acceptation of philosophers, who pretend to an abstracted notion of identity, then, according to their sundry definitions of this notion, it may or may not be possible for *divers persons* to perceive the *same thing*. But whether philosophers shall think fit to call a sensible thing the same or no is, I conceive, of small importance. Let us suppose several men together, all affected in *like* sort by their senses, and who had yet never known the use of language,

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they would without question agree in their perceptions. Though perhaps, when they came to the use of speech, some, regarding the uniformness of what was perceived, might call it the *same* thing; others, especially regarding the diversity of persons who perceived, might choose the denomination of *different* things. But who sees not that all the dispute is about a word, *i.e.* whether what is perceived by different persons may yet have the denomination 'same' applied to it? Or suppose a house, whose walls remaining unaltered, the chambers are all pulled down, and new ones built in their place, and that you should call this *the same*, and I should say it was not the same house, would we not for all this perfectly agree in our thought of the house, considered in itself? and would not all the difference consist in a sound? If you should still say, we differed in our notions, for that you superadded to your idea of the house the abstracted idea of identity, whereas I did not; I would tell you, I know not what you mean by the abstracted idea of identity, and should desire you to look into your own thoughts and be sure you understood it yourself.'¹

Inadequacy of a Conception of the Things of

¹ See Third Dialogue between Hylas and Philonous.

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Sense which excludes 'Sameness.'—Notwithstanding all that Philonous says, this translation of *sameness* into *similarity*, in what are commonly called 'the same things' seems to leave us still dissatisfied. For it offers us as many material worlds as there are percipient spirits in existence; multiplied too by the perceptions of 'the same thing' by the same person at different times. One might say that it also implies as many percipients as there are perceptions, were it not for our consciousness of *personal* sameness, which makes the difference between *individual spirits* and the *collections of impotent phenomena* conventionally called 'material substances.'

Sameness not mere Similarity.—But although nothing corresponding to personal identity in the spiritual world is presupposed in the presented appearances that compose the things of sense, may not the *appearances* that are perceived by me to-day be objectively identical with those perceived by me to-morrow; and may not the *appearances* perceived by a hundred persons at once be not merely similar but objectively identical? 'Similarity' is as much an empty abstraction as 'identity,' if either is so. The mere fancies that arise in my mind to-day, however similar,

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are not identical with those that arose yesterday ; and those that arise in one imagination are not identical with those that arise in the imagination of other persons, however much they may resemble them. Does not the difference between what is presented to us in sense and what rises in imagination appear in this ?

A Question proposed.—The question comes to be whether the permanent dependence of the material world on the Omnipotent Spirit is an adequate account of the continued objective existence of sense-presented phenomena. Are human spirits so related, sub-consciously it may be, to the Universal Spirit, as well as to one another, in and through the Universal Spirit, that objects presented to the senses of one man can in this way be *numerically the same* as those presented to different men, or to the same man at different times ? This question may be left for the consideration of the reader.

CHAPTER III

EMBODIED SPIRITS AND MORAL ORDER—BIRTH AND DEATH

The Material World becomes real in innumerable Spirits.—In interpreting the sense signs that compose the material world, I find that *I* am not the only human percipient and agent in existence. I find millions of companions, embodied like myself, revealing their spiritual reality and activity to one another, through their bodies and their bodily movements. The material world is realised at this moment in the perceptions of more than a thousand millions of individual human spirits embodied on our planet. To this multiplication of sense-perceptions in the minds of the millions of mankind now living must be added all like experiences in departed generations, as well as in generations yet unborn. Whether the sense-presented appearances of which each person

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is aware are objectively the same, or whether they must in all cases be separate spiritual editions of similar sense-appearances, is, as we have seen, an alternative ambiguously determined by Berkeley. At any rate the world of sensible signs is somehow real in millions of embodied human spirits.

Does the Human Spirit die with the Human Body?—But what of the individual human beings who thus contribute to reality, and help to produce changes, in the evolving world present to their senses? Generations of persons come and depart, ceasing to present visible or other sensible signs of their continued existence. Their bodies are born and die. Is the life of the human spirit contemporaneous with the birth and dissolution of the bodily organism which signifies its existence? Memory, which bears witness to the existence of the identical reminiscent spirit for a few past years, cannot recall an experience preceding the birth of its body; and the now living spirit can of course have had no experience of the consequence of the death of the body. His embodied life lasts, as it were for a moment, between a mysterious unbeginning Past and a mysterious unending Future. Does the spirit live only as long as the organised body lasts?

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Is there a Plurality of Spiritual Worlds ?
—Human spirits are the only ones that come within the range of human experience. Whether others, more or less like them, in other worlds, present there sensible signs of their existence, is an interesting question. The advance of astronomy has vastly enlarged the modern conception of the material world, and made it difficult to suppose that this small and remote planet is the only one, among innumerable stars and planets, that is the abode of embodied spirits. What of the other planets in our own solar system, and what of their central sun? What of the millions of other suns with their attendant planets, still inadequately explored by telescopes, or interpreted in the inferences of science? Is there a plurality of worlds occupied by embodied spirits?

Micromegas the Celestial Traveller. — At any rate we have no sensible signs of their existence, such as we have of our human companions. We cannot, like Micromegas, the supposed inhabitant of one of the planets of the Dog Star, in Voltaire's romance, ask a native of the planet Saturn, how many senses the persons on his globe have. 'We have seventy-two senses,' the Saturnian is made to say, 'and we are every

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day complaining of the smallness of the number. Our imagination goes far beyond our wants.' 'I can very well believe it,' Micromegas replies, 'for on our globe we have very near one thousand senses, and yet with all these we feel a constant inquietude, telling us that there are beings infinitely nearer perfection than ourselves.'

The Qualities of Matter must differ according to the Senses of the Percipients.—But if we cannot directly perceive signs of embodied spirits on neighbouring planets, even such signs as the supposed canals on Mars, there may be more or less probable inferences. Our own planet was long desolate, and may be desolate again. The history of the other heavenly bodies may be similar. And, as the planetary tour of Micromegas suggests, the sense organs of embodied spirits in different regions may vary in innumerable ways, and so the perceived appearances of matter may be different in each from the qualities matter presents to us. Our five senses may all be wanting in other stellar races; their offices being discharged by the seventy-two senses of the Saturnian, or the thousand senses of Micromegas; their respective material worlds consisting in consequence of qualities wholly unimaginable by man. What we call 'matter' would thus present

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qualities on each planet corresponding to the senses and sense experiences of its inhabitants,—all inconceivable to us.

Embodied Spirits in relation to Space and Time.—What precedes is only speculation. We must confine our inquiries about possible material worlds of embodied spirits, and the relation of spirits to their embodiments, to what is found in this corner of Space, and to what can reasonably be inferred from our own human experience. And what of human spirits under relations of Time? Has Spiritual Realism anything to tell about them before the birth or after the death of their bodies?

The Human Spirit, although Embodied, is Unextended, according to Berkeley.—That the human spirit, although embodied, must not be thought of as extended in space like the body, is involved in Berkeley's fundamental principle. A spirit cannot be located like a piece of matter. I animate my body 'all in the whole and all in every part'; so that it is practically pervaded by me. But this cannot mean that the sentient, thinking agent called *myself*, occupies a place in some part of my body, *e.g.* in the brain, or the heart, or the stomach. We cannot speak of the *size* of a pain or the *shape* of a volition, or the

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colour of a thought, unless metaphorically. The identical person of whom there is a consciousness in memory as having existed continuously throughout remembered experience, cannot be conceived as existing in a place, although its body must. One must not think of the spiritual personality as something to be measured by a foot-rule, and if one could, this would throw no light upon the mystery of self-consciousness.

Pre-natal Immortality.—Again, I may trace back the physical antecedents of my body before its birth, as I can trace back the constituents of any other mass of material phenomena; but I cannot retrace in memory any history of my spiritual life before my body was born. The physical antecedents or ‘natural causes’ out of which my body has been evolved may even form an unbeginning succession of changes in material phenomena. My spirit has no memory of itself before birth. My incarnation is the utmost past limit of my self-recollection, through ordinary consciousness at any rate. It may be that ‘our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting,’ that ‘the soul that rises with us, our life’s star hath had elsewhere its setting, and cometh from afar; not in *entire* forgetfulness, but trailing clouds of glory, from God who is

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our home.' But unless pre-natal experiences are now subconscious, ready to be revived under future conditions, we are not concerned with them. A pre-natal immortality of this sort is practically non-existent, and a *post-mortem* immortality of like sort would be practically personal annihilation.

Post-mortem Immortality does not necessarily depend upon Pre-natal Immortality.—We have no right to assume that faith in *post-mortem* immortality is dependent on assurance of pre-natal immortality; although some ancient and modern thinkers seem inclined to make this assumption. Why may not my spirit live after death, even if I began to exist individually only at birth? May a moral agent not begin an individual life that is endless, or at least that does not end when the matter organically associated with it dissolves in physical death?

Berkeley on Physical Death.—Berkeley does little to bring spiritual realism to bear upon the destiny of the human spirit after death—the most stupendous question concerning man that can engage human thought. The total impotence of the appearances that compose the things of sense, including our own bodies, on which he is fond of insisting, suggests continued life of the

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spirit. The body, as conceived by spiritual realism, cannot be the active cause of anything; and so its dissolution need not involve the contemporaneous extinction of the associated individual spirit. Here is what he says in one of his letters to his New England friend, Samuel Johnson:—"I see no difficulty in conceiving a change of state such as is vulgarly called Death, as well without as with material substances. It is sufficient for that purpose that we allow sensible bodies, *i.e.* such as are immediately perceived by sight and touch; the existence of which I am so far from questioning (as philosophers are used to do) that I establish it, I think, upon evident principles. Now it seems very easy to conceive the soul or self to exist consciously in a separate state, *i.e.* divested from those limits and laws of motion and perception with which she is embarrassed here, and to exercise herself in new ideas, *without the intervention of those tangible things we call our bodies.* It is even very possible to apprehend how the soul may have ideas of colour without the eye, or of sounds "without the ear.""¹ That we might have all our present experiences in sense in an unbodied state is not incredible; nor that, without our bodily

¹ *Life and Letters of Berkeley*, p. 181.

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intervention, we might, by a purely spiritual volition, produce changes in sensible phenomena, thus continuing to make them signs of our thoughts and intentions to other spirits, bodied or unbodied; nor that other spirits in return might in like manner make signs to us. But, unless under conditions now inconceivable, should we not be more embarrassed in maintaining social intercourse thus discarnate than when incarnate as we now are?

Berkeley's Negative Argument for Post-mortem Immortality, founded on the Total Impotence of Matter.—He has nothing to say about a pre-natal existence of individual human spirits, but he applies his conception of body to strengthen faith in *post-mortem* immortality, in this way:—‘It must not be supposed,’ he says, ‘that they who assert the natural immortality of the human soul are of opinion that the soul is absolutely incapable of annihilation, even by the infinite power of the Creator who gave it being; but only that it is *not liable to be dissolved by the ordinary laws of matter and motion*. They indeed who hold the soul of man to be only a thin vital flame, or a system of vital spirits, make it perishable and corruptible with the body; since there is nothing more easily dissipated than such a

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(compound) being, which it is naturally impossible should survive the ruin of the tabernacle wherein it is inclosed. But it hath been made evident that *bodies*, of what frame or texture soever, are only passive ideas of the mind; which is more distant and heterogeneous from them than light is from darkness. Nothing can be plainer than that the motions, changes, decays, dissolutions, which hourly befall natural bodies (and which is what we mean by the course of nature) cannot possibly affect active, simple, uncompounded substance such as we are.'¹ Such a being therefore is indissoluble by any force in the material universe, which *per se* is powerless. But this is only negative evidence of the continued life of the spirit, after so unique and unparalleled an event as the death of his body is to the owner of that body. One still asks whether bodily dissolution may not be the sensible sign, if not the cause, of the extinction of the spiritual individuality; and the only reply would be that there is no sufficient reason for putting this interpretation on the signs presented in bodily dissolution.

The Physical Order in Contrast with the Moral Disorder.—But are there not positive signs that death of their bodies does not mean contem-

¹ *Principles*, sec. 141.

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poraneous extinction of human spirits now incarnate? Consider the state of those spirits during their short embodiment between birth and death. Their disordered *moral* condition, and the unequal possession of happiness in proportion to goodness, gravely contrasts with the steady obedience to *physical* law in the material world. The world of the senses is in continuous orderly natural evolution; our spiritual world is at its best an often interrupted struggle towards intellectual and moral order. Natural order is universal; moral order is unattained. The voice of the patriarch expresses the thought of many: 'Let the day perish wherein I was born; let darkness dwell upon it; let it not be joined unto the days of the year. Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life unto the bitter in soul; which long for death and it cometh not, and dig for it more than for hid treasures; which rejoice exceedingly and are glad when they can find the grave.' If the total impotence of their bodies offers at the most negative evidence of what happens to the spirit when the body dissolves, may not this moral disorder afford to the theist some signs of the inadequacy of our present condition to our final destiny, under Omnipotent Goodness?

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A 'Preponderance' of Goodness and Happiness not enough.—Spiritual realism in Berkeley adds little that is new or distinctive of himself in answer to this question. He points out that there is a 'preponderance of happiness' on the whole, and he suggests that sentient pleasure is not after all the purpose of a human life. But this does not meet the dilemma that confronts us when we are asked whether the presence of Evil in any form, or to any extent, is reconcilable with omnipotent goodness being at the heart of the universe. The existence of one wicked man, or of one miserable man, seems as irreconcilable with omnipotent and omniscient goodness as the existence of millions. A mere 'preponderance' suggests defect either of goodness or of power; unless a universe morally perfect from the beginning involves a contradiction, for this even Omnipotence cannot overcome.

Berkeley on the Mixture of Pain and Happiness in the World.—This is what Berkeley has to say:—'As for the mixture of pain and uneasiness which is in the world, pursuant to the general laws of nature, and the actions of finite imperfect spirits, this in the state we are in at present, is indispensably necessary to our well-being. But our prospects are too narrow. We

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take, for instance, the idea of some one particular pain into our thoughts, and account *it* evil; whereas if we enlarge our view, so as to comprehend the various ends, connections, and dependencies of things; on what occasions, and in what proportions we are affected with pain or pleasure; the nature of human freedom; and the design with which we are put into this world,—we shall be forced to acknowledge that those particular things which, considered in themselves, appear to be evil, have the nature of good, when considered linked with the whole system of beings.’¹ This suggests that the sorrows, if not the sins of mankind, are consequences of the steadiness of natural order, and also that evil is an issue of the independent action of human agents, for which they alone are therefore responsible.

May not a slowly progressive Moral Universe be more Divine than one that is Perfect from the Beginning?—May it not be that the moral disorder now found on this planet signifies, not that we are living in an immorally-constituted universe, but rather that the *present* life of the moral agents who inhabit it is purgatorial; not perfect, but on the way to perfection; through struggle and suffering, and frequent re-

¹ *Principles*, sec. 158.

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lapse—consequences of the moral freedom which implies power of moral agents to make themselves bad? May not this purgatorial advance towards the perfect man, instead of perfection from the beginning, consist with theistic optimism, while it is in harmony with the slow and gradual evolution of nature? May it not be that moral and intellectual perfection of men from the beginning is even inconsistent with Omnipotent Goodness? A world of moral agents, encouraged to struggle through trial and temptation towards their own spiritual perfection or salvation, in co-operation with the Omnipotent Spirit, may be a deeper and truer expression of the rationality and morality immanent in the universe than a universe empty of moral agents, even with all the risks of failure which their independent agency involves. The accomplishment of supreme beneficent purpose for each individual agent, through the independent will entrusted to each—imperfectly realised in this life—may be conceived as the issue, not of present struggles and failures only, but of a succession of probationary periods of which the present is only one. ‘Work out your own salvation with fear; for it is God that worketh in you.’ The Divine Ideal may be a universe, in this slow way of moral trial and struggle,

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becoming gradually more and more valuable morally. But of this later on, in connection with the moral character of the Universal Mind.

‘This Mortal must put on Immortality’ in a Progressive Moral World.—Whether or not this is the explanation of the sin and sorrow in our present world, their existence seems to show that the earthly life of man is not the whole, that the death of the body does not mean extinction of the spirit. Can present evil on this planet be otherwise reconciled with Omnipotent Goodness being at the heart of the Whole? There must surely be a larger and purer life than is yet visible. ‘This mortal must put on immortality.’ More than eternally disordered lives is implied in our final faith.

The Natural and the Spiritual Body.—Does *post-mortem* life mean embodied life? And is it too a social life; or if so, is future social intercourse maintained as in the present material world; or by another kind of sense symbolism having no analogy to the present, its qualities being all different from those which appear in our present organs, and therefore unimaginable by us, like the sense world of Micromegas? If we are really living and moving, and having our being in a universe charged throughout with

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Omnipotent Goodness, must there not be sufficient analogy of the future with the present to connect personal identity in the life after death with the present social environment? The apostolic rebuke of those who ask, 'How the dead are raised up? and with what body do they come?' is satisfied with the vague reply, that the 'natural body' sown in death becomes after death 'a spiritual body,' somehow different from the present one.

Are Present Socialties dissolved for ever by Death?—But what of human spirits who have been associated in this life by special ties of love? Are those ties for ever dissolved by death? Are the human associations of family and friendship only transitory expedients to meet mundane wants? Is their final dissolution consistent either with continued personal identity, or with the perfect beneficence of the universal order?

'It is an old belief
That on some solemn shore,
Beyond the sphere of grief,
Dear friends shall meet once more.

'Beyond the sphere of time,
And sin and fate's control,
Serene in changeless prime
Of body and of soul.

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‘That creed I fain would keep,
That hope I’ll not forego ;
Eternal be the sleep,
Unless we waken so.’

Spiritual Realism and these Questions.—These questions carry us to the borderland of the knowable. Materialistic realism closes the prospect. *Its* universe is throughout ‘a riddle, an enigma, an inexplicable mystery. Doubt, uncertainty, suspense of judgment,’ appear as its only issue. Only in a spiritually constituted universe *can* we even ask, what the *moral character* of the Supreme Power is, and what the spiritual relations of the Universal Spirit are to the struggling, striving, and sorrowing spirits of men. In a finally material reality there is no room for this question. Purpose—good, evil, and indifferent—is all excluded. Under spiritual realism we can at least ask whether the universal spiritual purpose is optimist, or pessimist, or indifferent. Can man, with his limited intellectual faculty and experience, dispose in any positive way of the final problem of the universe? This supreme question and Berkeley’s relation to it belong to the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV

GOD, OR THE UNIVERSAL MIND, AND THEISTIC OPTIMISM

Nature virtually Supernatural.—The essentially spiritual reality of the material universe is the distinctive teaching of Spiritual Realism. The spiritual realist finds all that he sees, his own body included, to be appearances that depend for their actual and active reality upon the perceptions and the free agency of conscious Spirit. Their dependence upon *human* spirits is only occasional and interrupted—for men come and go, realising now this and now that, in their perceptions; and the changes due to their individual volitions are comparatively few and uncertain among the changes in nature. But the reality of the things of sense is not thus occasional and interrupted. The material universe is constantly known, and constantly kept in natural order, by the Universal Spirit; it may be in a natural evolution that is unbeginning and

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endless, its laws being the visible expression of Supreme Active Reason.

The Physical Cosmos and the Moral Chaos.—

The world of human life is a contrast to the material world. Here much that is, *ought not to be*. The moral order is disturbed; the physical order is steadily maintained. This fact is the supreme riddle of existence. The material world is wholly obedient to its natural order: the spirits of men are found resisting the moral order; and often reward seems to go to the disobedient, while suffering is the lot of the righteous. Is there room, under these conditions, for the faith that we are having our being in a universe charged with Omnipotent Goodness? Is implicit trust in the rationality and morality of the universe consistent with these ominous conditions? And what follows if final trust in the spiritually constituted universe, of which we are a part, and on which we continually depend, is therefore not possible? Are we not involved in Pyrrhonism with its total doubt and despair?

The Idea of God.—The *moral character* of the Omnipotent Spirit, in whom we live and have our being, is thus the supreme consideration under spiritual realism. Materialism (necessarily) turns at last upon blind abstract force, alien

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to all moral conceptions. The living God, neither dead matter nor abstract idea, is the final unity of spiritual realism. 'God is a mind, not an abstract idea compounded of inconsistencies and prescinded from all real things, as some moderns understand abstraction, but a really existing Spirit.... Whether the Supreme Mind be abstracted from the sensible world, and considered by itself as distinct from and presiding over the created system; or whether the whole universe, including mind together with the mundane body, is conceived to be God, and the creatures to be partial manifestations of the divine essence—there is no atheism in either case, whatever misconceptions there may be, as long as Mind or Intellect is understood to preside over, govern, and conduct the whole frame of things.'¹ The theism of Berkeley is large enough to comprehend all who see the immanence of Active Reason in the material and the human world. It is atheism only if the universe, in its immanent Spirit, is either diabolic or indifferent to moral purpose, when we find ourselves in an untrustworthy universe, a universe unfit to be reasoned about or acted in. A theistically constituted universe is optimist at the root.²

¹ *Siris*, sec. 323, 328.

² Argued in my *Philosophy of Theism*, part iii. chap. 2, and *passim*.

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The Atheistic Gospel of Death.—That without our own consent we have been born into an immoral universe, and that the only escape is through final extinction by death of the unhappy individual who made his appearance at birth, is a gospel that has been offered to suffering mankind in all ages and in different forms, as by Buddha in the East and by Lucretius in Greece. But a gospel of Death is surely a shallow gospel. If the constitution of things is consistent with our introduction at birth into a life so disordered as that we crave for death to dissolve self-consciousness for ever, may not death after all be only the introduction to another stage on a still downward journey? If the issue of birth is so disappointing, there is no evidence that the issue of death, in an atheistic universe, is to give relief. The span of a human life spent between a pre-natal and a *post-mortem* eternity remains a mystery, without ground for comfort in its termination. We did not, by our own responsible will, become individual persons, and we do not know that by death we can get out of suffering personality.

Polytheism and Manicheism.—Polytheism, with its plurality of finite ‘deities,’ although ministering to the religious instinct in its earlier

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and cruder stages, is virtually atheistic. Its 'gods' are not eternal, and to none of them is omnipotent goodness attributed. At the most they are only magnified men, objects of superstitious awe, ready to be propitiated by offerings, hypothetical entities, presupposing, like all else that is finite, the existence of Omnipotent Spirit. The polytheist's gods are not God in the distinctive and unique meaning of the word. At the utmost, like human spirits, they can only be part of the universe in which the true God must still be omnipresent. If the gods of polytheism really existed, their existence would presuppose what the monotheist means by God, as much as the existence of the world of the senses and of mankind involves this presupposition. And the same may be said of Manicheism. None of these faiths afford anchorage for final faith. They are in vogue only when religion and intelligence are in a crude undeveloped state, 'without God in the world.' Neither of the two antagonistic 'gods' of Manicheism is supreme and absolute.

Abstract Deism.—The abstract God admitted by the two 'minute philosophers,' in Berkeley's Dialogue, is not less atheistic. To allow that God exists, while denying that God is practically knowable, is only a polite retention of the name

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after emptying it of meaning. These minute philosophers grant that the mere being of God is a point of no consequence; an agnostic may concede it as a matter of indifference. 'The great point is in what sense the word God is to be taken in. The very Epicureans allowed the being of gods, but they were indolent gods, unconcerned with human affairs. Hobbes allowed a corporeal God; and Spinoza held the universe to be god. I could wish indeed the word God were omitted, because in most minds it is coupled with a sort of superstitious awe, the very root of all religion. I shall not, nevertheless, be much disturbed though the name be retained, and the being of God allowed, in any sense but that of a Mind which knows all things, like some judge or magistrate with infinite observation and intelligence. The belief of God in this sense fills a mind with scruples, lays him under constraint, and embitters his very being. But in another sense it may be attended with no great ill consequence. . . . Diagoras, a man of much reading and inquiry, discovered that, once upon a time, the most profound and speculative divines, finding it impossible to reconcile the attributes of God, taken in the common sense, or in any known sense, with human reason and the appear-

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ances of things, taught that the words *knowledge*, *wisdom*, *goodness*, and such like, when spoken of the Deity, must be understood in a quite distinct sense from what they signify in the vulgar acceptance, and from anything that we can form a notion of or conceive. Hence whatever objections might be made against the attributes of God they easily solved, by denying that those attributes belonged to God in this or that or any known particular sense; which was the same thing as to deny they belonged to Him at all. And thus denying the attributes of God, they in effect denied His being, though perhaps they were not aware of it.¹ In short, God *can* lie, or *can* be unjust and cruel, in the human meaning of those words, and yet 'good,' in this transcendental use of the word goodness.

A Slowly Progressive Moral Universe may be more truly Divine than One Perfect from the Beginning.—On the other hand, in Berkeley's spiritual realism all that is real necessarily culminates in Omnipotent Spirit, percipient and active, presupposed (and this in the human meaning of the words 'spirit' and 'omnipotence') in the continuous orderly reality of the material world. Nature is accordingly a system of

¹ See *Alciphron*, Dial. iv. sec. 16, 17.

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interpretable signs, in and through which God is constantly speaking, and which men are constantly interpreting, for the purposes of daily life, or in the formation of science; so showing that they are in intercourse with Intelligence sufficiently akin to their own for all human purposes, whatever infinite divine omniscience in itself may be. 'Thus the phenomena of nature, which strike on the senses and can be interpreted by man, form not only a magnificent spectacle, but a most coherent, entertaining, and instructive discourse. Natural productions, it is true, are not all equally perfect. But neither doth it suit with the order of things that they should be thus perfect. General rules or laws of nature are necessary to make the world intelligible, and from the constant observance of such rules *evils* will sometimes unavoidably ensue; things will be produced at slow lengths of time, and arrive at different degrees of perfection.' These words of Berkeley suggest that a moral universe which gradually increases in value may be more divine than a moral universe that is perfect from the beginning. It presents human personalities, educated in a divine school by struggle and suffering, rather than always perfect—co-operating in a slow, progressive, often inter-

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rupted evolution, as suggested in the preceding chapter.

Berkeley's Liberal Interpretation of Theistic Faith.—The immanence or omnipresence of God in the material universe, and in the human spirit, with the final harmony of the Whole, is, as we have seen, a thought apparent in *Siris*, along with a generous inclination to welcome even faint approaches to theistic faith. If any one should deny that God knows anything external to Himself, should this, he asks, be justly counted an atheistic opinion? 'Might we not conceive that God may be said to be All in divers senses; as He is the origin of all beings; as the *νοῦς* is the *νοητά*, a doctrine both of Plato and Aristotle; as the *νοῦς* comprehends and orders and sustains the whole mundane system. Aristotle declares that the divine force permeates the entire universe.'¹ The influence of Berkeley's Neoplatonic studies in his old age is here again apparent.

Berkeley's Last Words in Philosophy.—In the end Berkeley holds back in awe on the border line that limits the intellectual vision of man. His last words in *Siris* express in a tone of philosophical eloquence his view of the final human answers. 'In this mortal life we must be

¹ See *Siris*, secs. 328, also 300, 325, 327.

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satisfied to make the best of those glimpses within our reach. It is Plato's remark that while we sit still we are never the wiser, but going into the river and moving up and down is the way to discover its depths and shallows. If we exercise and bestir ourselves, we may even here discover something. The eye by long use comes to see even in the darkest cavern. Truth is the cry of all, but the game of a few. Certainly where it is the chief passion, it doth not give way to vulgar cares and views; nor is it contented with a little ardour in the early times of life, active perhaps to pursue, but not so fit to weigh and revise. He that would make a real progress in knowledge must devote his age as well as youth, the later growth as well as first fruits, at the altar of truth.'¹

Man needs a Morally Trustworthy Universe, as alone fit to be reasoned about.—Omniscient and omnipotent Spirit at the root of all, and animating all, is Berkeley's final conception. This is what he finds in '*esse is percipi*,' combined with the recognition of power exclusively in Spirit. But perfect *goodness* of the Universal Spirit is not necessarily the consequence of the final spirituality of the Real. The Spirit may be diabolic or indifferent. So for man in his

¹ *Siris*, secs. 367, 368.

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practical relations to the universe, the moral character of God is the urgent question. It makes the differences between final hope and final despair in the life of man during his momentary embodiment on this planet. If the omnipotent Spirit is morally untrustworthy, omnipotence and omniscience only aggravate doubt and despair. The ominous facts that appear in the history and present state of mankind may seem irreconcilable with Goodness in the Supreme Power; yet unless the Supreme Power is morally *perfect* the universe is not fit to live in. Its ultimate intelligibility and morality are postulated in our title to trust even in its natural order.

Berkeley fails to show how we are assured that the Universe is Ultimately Good.—Answers to the questions thus raised are hardly found in Berkeley. His exposition of Spiritual Realism adds little to our resources for meeting them. It adds emphasis, however, to our right to consider them; for they are relevant only so far as we are entitled to think of the universe as finally a *spiritual* reality; fit, therefore, to be tested as to its *moral* order. Material Realism cannot ask what the moral character of Matter is; and Matter *per se* is its only deity. We have seen how Berkeley meets the difficulty

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which some find in the gradual methods of natural evolution, when they treat tardy progress instead of perfection from the first, as inconsistent with the moral perfection of God. And he offers a similar reply to the objector who points to 'the miseries incident to human life,' as an argument that 'Nature is not actuated by perfect wisdom and goodness.' He explains human evils by the fact that the Supreme Agent follows general rules. This, even more than if all were perfect from the beginning, speaks, he thinks, for the wisdom and goodness of the Omnipotent Spirit. He asks us to enlarge our view of the proportion in which we are affected with pain and pleasure; the purpose of our present embodiment; and our freedom in action and consequent personal responsibility for our acts.

Preponderance of Good in the Moral World is not enough under Omnipotence.—'Preponderance' of good in this corner of the universe is what he thinks he finds, when he tries to measure the proportions of the good and the bad. But this fact, if granted, would fail to reconcile perfect goodness with absolute power. Instead of a halting inference from a necessarily limited number of observed facts, must not the rationality and

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morality of the universe be (at least unconsciously) *presupposed*, as the condition of our having any trustworthy intercourse with it, even through our senses? Its supposed sense symbolism is not worth trying to interpret, if it may become of a sudden all hollow and deluding. Reason immanent in the physical order of things, on which all the natural sciences proceed, is not guaranteed in a limited past experience of a universe which we enter as strangers to its necessities; unless we can be justified in taking for granted that our surroundings 'cannot lie,' because the omnipotent Spirit cannot deceive, being perfectly good, and good to all. Unless this can be postulated, reason cannot be applied to the facts of life. An immorally constituted universe would be uninterpretable.

No Security for Cosmic Order in an Immoral or non-Moral Universe.—A universe that is trustworthy enough to be interpreted and reasoned about scientifically, presupposes that the World-Spirit 'cannot lie,' that He cannot contradict truth, and justice, and beneficence. If He could there would be no security in spiritual realism even for the continuance of cosmic order, not to speak of beneficence in the final destiny of our now embodied lives. Under the atheistic con-

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ception, faith and hope, sustained as the springs of life in an ethically constituted universe, dissolve in universal doubt and pessimist despair.

Is Evil in the World necessarily inconsistent with Perfection in God?—Unless the absurdity of final moral faith can be demonstrated, it is reasonable to rest in faith and hope. But does the appearance of sin and suffering on this planet *demonstrate* that faith in the perfect ethical constitution of the world must be irrational? Is evil in mankind necessarily inconsistent with perfect wisdom and goodness in the Omnipotent?

Is the Existence of Finite Agents free to Act Responsibly consistent with Omnipotent Goodness?—This question recalls Berkeley's undeveloped hint about 'enlarging our view,' so as to take in 'human freedom' and the part which morally responsible agents play in this world.¹ Does the existence of persons who are free to make themselves good or bad contradict absolutely goodness of purpose at the root of all? *Can* God rightly delegate power to act responsibly to persons? If man's moral respon-

¹ See *Principles*, sec. 153, also *Siris*, sec. 257. The ambiguity of the term 'freedom' should be noted; for it is sometimes applied (as here) to the power of moral agents to make themselves wicked, and in other cases to their moral perfection or liberation from evil.

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sibility for what he does means that he is the *creator* of acts for which *he* can be justly condemned, does this subtract from the perfection of the Universal Spirit?

Is not a Bar to the Existence of Free Agents a Greater Limitation of Divine Power and Goodness?—One may ask in return whether inability to admit moral agents into the universe does not involve a greater limitation of omnipotence? And the fact that men *must* be creators of *acts* for which they are responsible does not mean that they create *the agents* to whom the acts are finally referable. We all enter life without our own leave, and therefore we are not responsible for beginning to live; but this is no bar to our acts of will afterwards being ours, so that we can be justly condemned when they are evil. Here Spiritual Realism contrasts fundamentally with Spinoza.

Basis of Theistic Optimism.—Optimism in the final constitution of the universe is implied in its rationality and rectitude; and this in its turn is only another way of expressing its ultimately theistic constitution. Theistic optimism is thus at the root of the faith and hope which intercourse with the universe presupposes. That this intercourse would otherwise be

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irrational, and therefore paralysed, is the argument which in the end sustains theistic optimism. Reason is paralysed by the supposition that truth and falsehood, beneficence and cruelty, justice and its opposite—according to the highest human conceptions of these virtues¹—are indifferent in the universal system, and are imposed on man only by human limitations; or that our ethical conceptions, in the human meaning of duty and moral responsibility, can be subject to arbitrary will. The *character* of the Omnipotent Spirit would otherwise be no security for the permanence of even physical order. If transcendent or divine morality *can* consist with what man must condemn as unrighteous, then the faith that inspires science and human life must die.

May not this Mortal Life be Purgatorial?—Berkeley's reference to slow and often interrupted progress in the world of moral agents suggests how the sin and sorrow found on this planet may consist with optimism at the root of the universal order. For may not gradual amelioration through power to resist good be involved in the

¹ It must be noted that human conceptions of what is reasonable and morally right, crude at first, are in progressive development.

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optimist ideal; necessitated 'goodness' in a finite agent not being moral goodness? May not moral perfection be finally attainable only with free play of the individual will, and gradual education through suffering and failures? May not a prolonged purgatory, begun if not completed in this embodied life on earth, continued it may be through unknown periods after the death of these bodies,—may not this be the optimist way to final perfection of the individual character? At any rate is one justified in answering these questions with a dogmatic negation? The endless life in its earlier stages may be essentially purgatorial; and the purgatorial discipline may be more or less prolonged in different individuals in proportion to individual resistance.

The Universe is a Constant Miracle.—If by miracles are meant events due to the *immediate* agency of Omnipotent Goodness, the material world of Spiritual Realism is a constant miracle. All that happens, except what is due to the free agency of finite persons, morally responsible for their own actions, is the immediate issue of miraculous action. 'Nothing can be more evident than the existence of God, who is intimately present to our minds, producing in them all that variety of

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sensations which continually affect us; on whom we have an absolute and entire dependence, in short, 'in whom we live and move and have our being.' But an objector may say, Hath *Nature* no share in the production of natural things, and must all be ascribed to the immediate and sole operation of God? I answer, If by *Nature* is meant only the visible series of effects or sensations imprinted on our minds according to certain fixed and general laws, then it is plain that *Nature* taken in this sense cannot produce anything at all. But if by *Nature* is meant some Being distinct from God, as well as from the laws of nature and things perceived by sense, then I must confess the word is to me an empty sound without any intelligible meaning annexed to it; a vain chimera introduced by those heathens who had not just notions of the omnipresence and infinite perfection of God.¹ *Nature*, in short, is a divine miracle, not an independent agent.

Special Miracles.—This constant miracle of the universe is not inconsistent with the occasional occurrence of events that are inexplicable under the rules of the divine order as thus far discovered by man. If the material world exists for the sake of persons, physical events, unaccountable

¹ *Principles*, sec. 149, 150.

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by our limited intelligence, yet in harmony with the supreme order, may occur; it may be, as means of calling human attention to deeper and truer spiritual revelations of God than man could otherwise realise. 'Special miracles' of this sort are recognised by Berkeley as at least 'probable,' while he dismisses *a priori* reasons against their occurrence as unreasonable. 'Probable arguments are for him a sufficient ground of faith' in 'unaccountable events' that are associated with revelations of God which might otherwise have remained dormant in the individual. 'Who ever supposed,' he asks, 'that scientific proofs were necessary to make a Christian? It will be sufficient if such analogy appears between the dispensations of grace and nature, as may make it probable (although much should be unaccountable in both) to suppose them derived from the same author.'¹ The last sentence curiously anticipates Butler's argument in his *Analogy*, published four years after those words appeared in the *Minute Philosopher* of Berkeley. But it was left unelaborated and unapplied by the author of the *Minute Philosopher*.

Revelation of the Universal Spirit in the

¹ *Alciphron, or The Minute Philosopher*, Dial. vi. sec. 31.

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Cosmos and in Christ. — The more articulate revelation of the Universal Spirit in and through Christ *ultimately* appeals to the same inevitable presuppositions out of which optimist theistic faith in the moral rightness and perfect goodness of the Supreme Power emerges. Hence the response of the Spirit in man to the assurance that ‘God is love,’ having no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that he should turn from his wickedness and live. So that the ultimate realisation of goodness in all embodied spirits—not for their merits, but for its own sake—may be taken as the end towards which progressing humanity is under God slowly advancing. We have found this faith and hope latent even in the universal trust in the credibility of experience, and in the scientific assumption of constant order in nature—reinforced under the claim of a more articulate revelation, by its experienced adaptation to the moral needs of man, and to the limitations of human intelligence. For is not a perfect man the highest moral conception of God that man can rise to? Does not this give to God in Christ a unique place in the history of mankind? He has called forth, in an unexampled degree, the latent faith in the moral perfection of the Universal Spirit

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that is involved in the trustworthiness of external nature—especially when the evolution of the material world is recognised, as by Berkeley, under his doctrine of the total impotence of matter, to be due to the immediate agency of God.

Further development of Spiritual Realism.—Want of space forbids me to pursue suggestions of other ways in which Spiritual Realism admits of development and application. It remains, in conclusion, to cast an eye back upon our past journey.

RETROSPECT

Berkeley's Distinctive Principle.—We have found the distinctive principle of Berkeley's Realism in the truth, to himself evident, that the material world has its being and agency in Spirit. In itself it is wholly impotent, and finally dependent for its seeming agency upon the Universal Mind. Its constant transformations, on which our embodied lives depend, are accordingly believed to be cosmical and interpretable, not chaotic and uninterpretable; the cosmos being due to the constant activity of the all-pervading omnipotent Spirit. This at least is the deepest and truest ultimate conception of Infinite Power that is

RETROSPECT

available for man, inadequate as it must be to the divine or infinite Reality. So far Berkeley.

The Moral Character of the Universal Spirit. —But what of the moral character of the Universal Spirit? Spiritual Existence and Omnipotence do not carry us far, unless the spiritual Reality is morally perfect. Berkeley does not help us much at this critical stage. We find ourselves in a universe in which the physical cosmos, moved by the Universal Spirit, often takes the appearance of moral indifference, in the seeming cruelties perpetrated under its evolution; and the embodied spirits on this planet are morally far short of the ideal man. What must be the moral character of the Omnipotent Spirit who is revealed through a universe like this? Is moral perfection present in this revelation, or does it mean moral indifference, or even moral imperfection and limited power?

Our Absolute Security. — Unless we are to subside into universal pessimist doubt, we must *presuppose*, in the face of these ominous facts, that we are in a universe that is fit to be reasoned about—a succession of calculable changes, so that we can have experience and science, and can forecast our way with more or less reasonable confidence in proportion to our intellectual pro-

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gress. Is not our only absolute security for this, the faith that the directing Spirit is morally perfect, and omnipotent—omnipotent, that is to say, within the limit of non-contradiction, for even Omnipotence ‘cannot lie,’ and cannot make things that are equal to the same thing unequal to one another?

The Final Alternative—Unless then it can be shown that the ominous signs presented by the universe *demonstrably contradict* perfect goodness in the Universal Power, are we not obliged, by the *reductio ad absurdum* alternative of universal pessimist doubt, to accept in faith and hope the moral perfection of the Supreme? Have we not, in the moral discipline and educative influence of physical nature, at least a possible explanation of its supposed cruelty and injustice; while the risks involved in the existence and independent activity of moral agents, thus responsible for their acts, may sufficiently account for present manifestations of evil under Theistic Optimism? If Nature is practically trustworthy, and fit to be scientifically reasoned about, the Omnipotent Spirit immanent in it must be perfectly good and design the goodness of all. This is final faith.

A SHORT LIST OF BOOKS BEARING ON THE SUBJECT

1. *The Collected Works of Berkeley*, edited with Annotations and Dissertations, by Professor Campbell Fraser. 3 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1871.
2. Second Edition of the above, amended by Professor Campbell Fraser. 4 vols. Oxford, 1901.
3. *Life and Letters of Berkeley*, by Professor Campbell Fraser. 1 vol. Oxford, 1871.
4. *Annotated Selections from Berkeley*, by the same Author. Fifth Edition. Oxford, 1899.
5. *Berkeley*, by the same Author. Second Edition. Edinburgh, 1903.
6. *Berkeley and Human Knowledge*, by Professor Krant. University of Pennsylvania, 1874.
7. *Étude sur la Vie et les Œuvres Philosophiques de Berkeley*. A. Penjon. 1878.
8. *Berkeley and Positivism*, by St. George Stock. 1879.
9. *Essays and Addresses: Berkeley*, by the Right Honourable A. J. Balfour. 1893.

DATES IN THE LIFE OF BERKELEY

First Period

Birth in Co. Kilkenny,	1685
In Trinity College, Dublin,	1700-13
Publication of <i>New Theory of Vision</i> ,	1709
„ <i>Principles of Human Knowledge</i> ,	1710
„ <i>Three Dialogues</i> ,	1713

Second Period

In London, France, and Italy,	1713-20
Publication of <i>De Motu</i> ,	1720
In Trinity College, Dublin,	1721-24
Made Dean of Derry,	1724
The Bermuda Project and Negotiations in London,	1724-28
Departure for America,	1728
In Rhode Island,	1728-31
Publication of <i>Alciphron, or the Minute Philosopher</i> ,	1732
„ <i>Vindication of the Theory of Vision</i> ,	1733

Third Period

Made Bishop of Cloyne,	1734
Distress in Ireland and <i>The Querist</i> ,	1735-38
Publication of <i>Siris</i> ,	1744
Departure for Oxford,	1752
Death at Oxford,	1753

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